/366 cont./

[796] [562] [887] [732]

In this case the alferez was an old woman, wrinkled and respectable, /367/ assisted by her son, a young boy 18 to 20 years old who was a deaf-mute. She led the procession dressed in her most beautiful attire with flowers stuck in her hair.

The procession returned to the chapel to kneel and to perfume again the altar, on which a spot of still fresh blood stood out. The procession broke up shortly afterward, but part of those present accompanied the alfereza and her son, who proceeded with one of the banners from the church up to the door of their hut. There the standard, which the alfereza and her son kissed respectfully, was rolled up and attached to a stake of Cereus.

[616] The authorities of the soya seated themselves behind a table, and a mantle (talu) was spread out on the ground a certain distance away, on the edge of which the alfereza and her daughter-in-law squatted. They were promptly surrounded by a large number of women who grouped themselves in a horseshoe. A small tablecloth covered with coca leaves was placed on the table, as on the talu.

The alfereza and her son began to pray on their knees before the banner and offered up a libation of alcohol to it; then the young man went to get his wife and repeated the same ceremony with her (Pl. XII, A /see p. 132/). The alcaldes congratulated the alfereza, repeating the sacred formula of suma hora. This rite of politeness accomplished, they went to kiss the post against which the standard had been fastened, and then, taking two wooden cups with two bulls carved on the inside from the table, they offered up a libation of chicha accompanied by a prayer (Pl. XVII, A /see p. 138/).

[415] [278] On the two sides of the talu behind which the women were seated a very old footless wooden cup, very old, had been placed, from which the women one after the other drank chicha (Pl. XVII, D).

The audience began to chew and to offer up libations. Prayers crossed each other, and in this exchange of vows and

/145/

/Pl. I faces p. 145./

101 36 161 The last group of Uru Indians living in the village of Iru-Itu, or Angoake, on the banks of the Desaguadero, about 25 kilometers from Lake Titicaca, has almost entirely disappeared in the course of the last years.

731 133 A long period of drought between 1940 and 1945 has lowered the level of Lake Titicaca by more than three meters; at many points the water has receded several hundred meters.

[101] [62] [137] At the time of my first trip in 1938, the village of Iru-Itu had about 100 inhabitants; the Desaguadero went through vast swamps dotted with numerous ponds and lagoons with a great abundance of totora beds /totorales/. In 1941 a plain of sterile sand had replaced the swamps and fields of reeds; the Desaguadero was reduced to a narrow, muddy ditch.

731 433 178 Because of this the Uru have lost practically all their means of existence. The swamps covered with reeds, the totora beds, furnished them with the Scirpus necessary to make their fishing balsas and to cover their houses and served as shelter for numerous aquatic fauna: fish, suches (Trichomycterus dispar and rivulets), bogas, hispe, carache (various Orestias), and birds sought by the Indians for their meat and eggs. Their entire economy, based partly on hunting and fishing and partly on the sale of totora fishing balsas and mats to the neighboring Indians, has thus been destroyed.

16 [67] [887] [178] Many of the Uru are dead. Others, the young ones, have dispersed, mingling with the neighboring Aymara groups; some have joined the Lake Titicaca fishers. The old ones, more attached to their customs and their /146/ traditions and incapable of adapting themselves to new conditions of existence, have remained in the dead village.

[356] [162] [144] In 1944 most of the houses had been abandoned; the totora roofs could not be repaired for lack of reeds, and many had given way. Only 21 people remained in the village; several women were of Aymara origin, and the few children were in part Uru-Aymara half-breeds.